

The Historical Argument for Catholicism

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CHRISTIANITY is an historical religion—it centers around an historical Person—it appeals for credentials to historical documents; and, therefore, all the arguments in its favor must to some extent at least be drawn from history. Still a distinction can be made between the argument for Catholicism which deals with the nature of her internal life and organization—her doctrines, Sacraments, and legislative system; and the argument which tells the story of her external life—of the men whom she has found to champion her cause, of the battles she has fought, the foes she has met, the wounds she has received, the victories she has won; and from this story of her march down the ages draws conclusions as to the validity and reasonableness of her claims.

Both arguments appeal to history, but the former may involve much metaphysical and theological speculation, whereas the latter is purely historical. It is with this latter we are dealing in this paper.

It is my purpose briefly to indicate some lines of argument in favor of Catholicism which may be drawn from a consideration of the number and nature of those who, all down the centuries, have been her staunch supporters; the character of her enemies; the opposing systems and organizations she has met and conquered; from the steadfastness with which, in the midst of every conflict, she has clung to the teaching of her Founder; and the wonderful life and vigor, unity and strength which are still her characteristics after nineteen centuries of strenuous existence.

There is in the world a certain body of men who call themselves Rationalists. They profess to take their stand on reason alone, to look to reason as the final court of

arbitration, and refuse to allow any principle of authority or religion to interfere with its findings. That is what they profess. But they begin by excluding the possibility of miracles, of a Divine Revelation of a supernatural religion, even though evidence for these things be available which appeals to reasonable men. That there must be such evidence seems clear from the fact that millions of reasonable, well-educated, scientific, up-to-date people have accepted, and do accept, miracles and Revelation as actual facts, and regulate their whole lives on the supposition that they are facts.

Now, in contradistinction to such men, I assert that history proves that Catholics are in the true sense of the term rationalists—that is, men guided by reason; and that the Catholic system is the only one founded on sound reason—is the only system that fearlessly and frankly ever faces all the available evidence and forms its judgment according to that evidence.

I. THE DEFENDERS OF CATHOLICISM

No organization in history has had such a splendid line of defenders as the Catholic Church—from Paul of Tarsus, the first great Catholic Apologist, whose writings have come down to us, to the fine array of modern preachers, lecturers and writers, of every nation on earth, who are so busy in proclaiming their reasoned conviction that Catholicism is a true religious system.

When the test of reason was applied to the pagan myths of Greece and Rome, belief in those myths crumbled away and disappeared for ever from the face of the earth, because such belief was founded on ignorance and superstition.

The same process we see going on around us today in the case of the various fancy sects that are for ever springing into being—flourishing a brief space, then disappearing for ever. Have you ever heard, for example, of the "Deep Breathers"? They insist, I believe, not merely on the hygienic and lung-strengthening properties of deep breathing (in this we would not quarrel with them), but on the mystic and spiritual effects produced by taking a deep breath, holding it as long as possible, and pronouncing while so doing certain formulæ.

Common sense—that is, plain reason—finally kills these fancy religions.

Not so with Catholicism. True reasoning serves simply to strengthen belief in the Catholic position. And for historical proof of this let us, in the first place, glance back over the last one hundred years—the years that have elapsed since the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, and turn our attention to one small portion of the Catholic Church—namely, England.

NEWMAN'S APOLOGIA

By 1829, the Catholics in England, harried and persecuted for over two centuries, had reached a very low ebb in point of number and organization. But their courage was beginning to revive, they were coming more into the open and making their influence felt. And, behold! where, of all places in the world, did this influence of the old Faith produce the most noticeable results? Why, in the very home and sanctuary of reason, the center of learning and culture in England—namely, the University of Oxford. Almost immediately after the Emancipation Act of 1829, the famous Oxford Movement began. A few years later John Henry Newman, Fellow of Oriel College, published the famous Tract for the Times, No. 90—which one may regard as his first public step on the march to Rome.

Just twenty years later, in 1864, Newman wrote his "Apologia," the history of his religious opinions. The book was electric in its effect. It was a masterpiece of literature produced by the greatest living exponent of English prose—but it was also a work of close and intense reasoning—telling the world why John Henry Newman, at the age of forty-five, had quitted the Anglican Establishment and embraced the Catholic Faith. It is a splendid exposition by a master mind of the reasonableness of Catholicism.

The "Apologia," as all know, has had an extraordinary influence in bringing people into the Catholic Church. Since 1845, the tide of converts to Catholicism, especially from the educated classes in England and America, has gone on increasing year by year. Many, perhaps most, of these conversions were the result of historical study; and as each one of them submitted to the Church and made Catholicism the guide of his life, he became a new and living proof of

the proposition that Catholicism is founded on reason.

For surely, when hundreds of thousands of people of every walk of life, of every rank of society, of all shades of religious upbringing and surroundings; educated people, many of them recognized as foremost authorities in historical, philosophic or scientific research, after long and careful investigation, in the bright noonday of modern culture and development; when these people in ceaseless streams embrace the Catholic Faith, and when practically all these people not only persevere in their adhesion to the Faith, but deliberately state, after ten or twenty or thirty years of Catholic life, that they have never had a doubt or a moment of real intellectual discomfort in the profession of their Faith; and when they, furthermore, assert (as many have done) that the Catholic religion seemed to bring them an extraordinary sense of intellectual liberty—expansion of soul—light and strength, then, I say, the religious system that has such testimony in its favor must have strong, convincing arguments to justify its existence and to demonstrate its superiority over every other religious system in the world.

EARLY CATHOLIC EVIDENCE LECTURES

So it is when we look back one hundred years and consider just one corner of the Catholic Church. But now let us look back not merely over a hundred or two hundred or five hundred years—not merely over a thousand but over nearly two thousand years of history—and what do we find? Generation after generation, century after century, tells the same story. Earnest, thinking, reasoning, learned people, men who did not want to be fooled and had no inclination to swallow idle tales, religious people whose one object was to make a right use of life, examined the claims of Catholicism, studied the arguments on which it is based, long and earnestly, and then gave their adhesion to it with whole-hearted, unhesitating confidence. And the point I want to insist upon is that these people constantly appeal to reason as the foundation of their faith and the grounds of their acceptance of Catholicism.

Go back right to the beginning. Think, for example, of the Apologists of the second century, let us say Justin the Martyr. We have two Apologies, or, to use modern phraseol-

ogy, two Catholic Evidence lectures, presented by him to the Roman Emperor or to the Senate about the year 150 of our era. Read those treatises and you will find that Justin is constantly appealing to reason in defense of the Christian Faith. He is, in fact, one of the first who deliberately set himself to study the relations between faith and reason; that is, to defend our Faith by showing how it is based on reason. Considering the pioneer work he did in this respect, I think St. Justin has strong claims to be regarded as the special patron of Catholic Evidence lectures; for he started the series of public evidence lectures of which our modern lectures are a continuation.

In his case, these efforts to demonstrate Catholic truth led to his violent death. He was martyred in Rome about 167 A. D. Whether similar results are likely to follow our efforts, time alone will tell.

A few years later than Justin we meet with two remarkable men in the great commercial city of Alexandria, both deep students, men of wide reading and extraordinary intellectual activity, Clement and his great pupil, Origen. Origen is one of the most remarkable men the world has ever known. He was the founder of Biblical textual criticism. He took the most extraordinary pains to get at the original Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible, collecting and comparing manuscripts with the greatest diligence. He was a man of vast intellectual power and was deeply versed in all the philosophic and religious learning of the day; and he had at his disposal the great Alexandrian Library—the greatest collection of books in antiquity.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Both Clement and Origen carried on the work of Justin the Apologist—that is, they, too, set themselves to justify the faith of Catholics by appealing to reason and showing that the beliefs of the Catholic Church are founded on reason. Origen died in 254 A. D. Exactly 100 years later was born the man who is regarded by many as the keenest and brightest intellect the Christian Church has ever known, St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. After wandering for years in the mazes of religious error, Augustine was at last caught by the beauty of Catholic truth, embraced the Catholic Faith, and devoted some forty-five years of strenu-

ous activity to the defense of that Faith. The numerous works he wrote in its defense have been a shining light in the Christian world ever since he lived. He died in 430. The fifteenth centenary of his death will be celebrated this year by the whole Catholic world; and this fact had its weight in determining the Central Committee of International Eucharistic Congresses to nominate Carthage as the scene of the Eucharistic Congress in 1930. For Carthage, though now almost a deserted ruin, was a busy and flourishing commercial center in Augustine's day, and was visited frequently by him. The city of Hippo, of which he became Bishop in 391, is situated some miles to the west of Carthage.

Now, when Augustine embraced the Catholic Faith, he did not do so out of mere blind enthusiasm. In his youth he wandered far from the Church, in spite of the instructions of his saintly mother, Monica, and plunged into the alluring speculations of Manicheism, a form of that Persian dualism which in one shape or other has fascinated human minds from the days of Zoroaster down to our own. Augustine remained for years an adherent of this system; but gradually, step by step—aided by God's grace—he disentangled himself from its errors as well as from the meshes of sensual indulgence into which he had sunk, and won his way to the full light of the Catholic Faith.

We have the story of that great struggle and splendid victory told in words of incomparable beauty in his "Confessions," one of the world's greatest books.

THE WEAPON OF REASON

Now, what was the weapon by which this great man came to be convinced of the truth of Catholicism? It was the weapon of reason. God's grace was of course there, helping, illuminating and guiding him, but Augustine, in the true and noble sense of the term, was one of the world's great rationalists or reasoners; and, as a result of his reasoning, he embraced whole-heartedly the doctrine of Catholicism, as the only trustworthy religious system in the world. And here, perhaps, we may point a comparison. Augustine—one may say—was the John Henry Newman of his age. The moral complexion of the early life of these two men was indeed very different; Newman's youth was one of in-

nocence; Augustine's, unfortunately, given over to sensual indulgence. But intellectually there is a remarkable parallel. Each had lived for years in heresy, and each came ultimately under the spell of the Catholic Church, was won by her beauty, and after a hard struggle surrendered entirely to her claims. And then each spent forty-five years employing in her defense glorious gifts of eloquence in speech and writing. Both were men intense in their devotion to truth as reason showed it to them. And because they followed that light, therefore they embraced the Catholic Faith.

Moreover, each of these two great thinkers stood at a turning point in history. In Augustine's day the Roman Empire was being shaken to its foundation by the invasions of wild hordes from the north that swooped down on the old decaying pagan civilization, and were destined finally to wreck it and set up in its place their own barbaric States, whence the nations of modern Europe were to develop. Newman also lived in the heart of a great empire that, like the Roman, had set her giant iron footsteps on land and sea all round the busy world—and he, too, was living at a turning point of history, when new intellectual forces were rushing in to plunder the decaying intellectual civilization that had no strength to resist the onslaught.

For Protestantism, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was played out as a religious force. The Reformation had done only too well its deadly work in England. The old Catholic Faith had been swept away. The Catholic Church in England that had been one of the glories of Christendom, as its splendid monuments still testify, had dwindled to a handful of people cowering out of sight and practising their religion by stealth. The Anglican Establishment, which had usurped the place of Catholicism, was, insofar as real inward religion was concerned; crumbling to pieces. The storm of so-called Rationalism was raging and rising in intensity. We know how that movement developed in England. Men like John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and a host of others, in the name of science, swooped down upon the defenseless people of England—defenseless because they had been robbed of the protective armor of Catholic Faith—as the Vandals swooped on the Roman Empire. And the result was inevitable. Protestantism had not the strength to resist, with the result that

today England is once more, to a large extent, a pagan country.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Augustine and Newman—two great men of reason—and both intense defenders of Catholicism, were separated by 1,500 years of busy life. Midway between them comes a man in some respects greater than either, Thomas Aquinas, the great Dominican theologian, whose intellectual activity and ceaseless toil in defense of Catholicism filled up a large portion of the thirteenth century.

Now, it is worth noticing that Thomas Aquinas also stands in contact with another master mind that had pondered on the problems of life just 1,500 years earlier; probably the greatest mind that pagan Greece produced, and one of the world's greatest thinkers and investigators—Aristotle of Stagira. This great man, the teacher and traveling companion of Alexander the Great, had, like Sir Francis Bacon, taken all knowledge for his province, and his subtle and restless intellect sought to probe all the secrets of the mystery-laden universe around him.

Aristotle's teaching reached St. Thomas only in a mutilated and imperfect form; but the kindred soul recognized at once the pure gold of genuine thought; and so Thomas set himself to master all the secrets of Aristotle—sifted out all that was best in him, and incorporated it into the Catholic system. And the glorious synthesis he produced is enshrined for us in his immortal works, especially in the incomparable "Summa."

Aristotle had no supernatural Revelation to guide him, though some think he may have studied the Sacred Books of the Jews. He is the supreme example of pure reason, working faithfully to reach the goal of truth. He is, therefore, in the true sense of the word, a rationalist—and, behold! his system is of all pagan philosophical systems the one that fits in best and most easily with Catholicism. Aristotle's system has been to a large extent absorbed by the Catholic Church, and through the Church the terms used or invented by Aristotle have become current coin of our daily speech.

Now, why is it that Thomas Aquinas, whose great brain grasped the Catholic system in all its bearings as perhaps

no other brain—except that of the Divinely inspired writers—has ever grasped it, found in Aristotle so much that was in tune with Catholic doctrine? Why did St. Thomas find that Catholic mysteries such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, could be most easily set forth in terms of Aristotelian philosophy? Simply because the Catholic system is based on reason, appeals to reason, and the more faithful one is in following the pure light of reason the more certain is he to arrive at, and find complete satisfaction in the all-embracing Divine philosophy of the Catholic Faith.

A LEGION OF DEFENDERS

I have cited a few of the Church's great line of defenders. Had I leisure and learning enough I might expatiate endlessly on the innumerable other great intellects whose work in defense of Catholicism as a reasonable religion has been so splendid.

They are a mighty band, and their testimony constitutes historical evidence of the first order in favor of Catholicism. That is, they are capable witnesses, who have examined the question from every point of view, have weighed every objection, pondered over every difficulty that the wit of man has ever brought against the Christian position. And their deliberate and reasoned verdict has been unhesitating acceptance of Catholicism as the only true solution of life's problems.

Lord Macaulay, in his famous Essay on Von Ranke's History of the Popes, discusses this argument. He feels the force of it. He admits that when a man like Sir Thomas More, Chancellor under Henry VIII, "one of the choice specimens of human wisdom and virtue," lived and died a fervent Catholic, and accepted all the Church's doctrines, including the doctrine of the Real Presence—it is a staggering fact, not easily accounted for. And what is Macaulay's explanation? For, of course, being a Rationalistic historian, he must find an explanation. Simply this: he calls it "superstition," and adds that for the vagaries of superstition there is no accounting.

Now, just think of the sublime impudence of this! Thomas Babington Macaulay, essayist and historian, sits in judgment on the saints and doctors of nineteen centuries of Christian thought—on Augustine and Jerome, Aquinas

and Duns Scotus, Sir Thomas More and all the vast host of Catholic witnesses, and solemnly declares *ex cathedra*—and with evident consciousness that this is an infallible pronouncement—that all those thousands of men who spent their lives in scrutinizing Catholic doctrine, in conforming their lives to it in practice, were the victims of crass superstition, had been somehow or other deluded into accepting as the revealed truth of God doctrines which, in reality, are mere fantastic absurdities!

Surely such an explanation as this is itself the greatest possibly absurdity! Yet that is still the attitude of Rationalists towards Catholicism. These men, who deny all miracles, are asking us to accept an explanation which, in itself, would be a miracle of the most inconceivable kind. They ask us to believe that the whole of Christian civilization which is the product of the Catholic Church, that all the beneficial results brought about by the teaching of Catholic doctrine—the abolition of slavery, the establishing of the sanctity of marriage and the dignity of woman, the purifying of morals, the sweeping away of the nameless vices and abominations of paganism—in fact, all that goes to make up the glory of our civilized life, all of that is founded on a lie, is the outcome of nothing better than degrading superstition.

II. STEADFASTNESS OF CATHOLICISM

We have thus far considered briefly the number and character of the people who have been defenders of Catholicism. Let us now dwell for a few moments on another fact which stands out clearly in the history of our religion—viz., the steadfastness with which it has clung to its principles and maintained unchanged its spiritual identity through nineteen centuries of incessant battling with hostile forces, opposing systems and organizations of the most formidable kind.

History tells us that the tendency of every human institution is to change and finally decay. In the department of religious organizations perhaps no period of the world's history has seen such enormous and far-reaching doctrinal changes in Christian sects outside the Catholic Church as the past fifty or sixty years.

Christian bodies that have hitherto clung to fundamental

Christian ideas and principles, such as the Divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, have within the past half-century become riddled with Modernism—that is, have relaxed their hold on some or all of these inherited Christian ideas.

The party in the Church of England that one would have expected to be most tenacious of age-long Christian doctrines is the "Anglo-Catholic" or High Church party. Yet, there has just been published in England by members of this branch of the Anglican Establishment a new edition of the whole Bible with extensive introductions, commentaries, and other apparatus. It is a work of vast research and scholarship; no less than fifty-three writers take part in it. Its general editor is Dr. Charles Gore, formerly Bishop of Oxford. Yet this edition of the Bible, published in 1928 by the High Anglican party in England, states quite openly that it no longer regards the Bible as an inspired book. Of the introductory essay by Dr. Gore a competent critic writes: "Its purpose is to remove from the path of exegesis all such inspiration as connotes either Divine authority or inerrancy in the Scriptures of both Testaments alike."

Yet 400 years ago the spiritual ancestors of these Anglicans cried out emphatically that the Bible was the only source and fountain head of Revelation in the world, and fiercely denounced the Church of Rome for holding that Christ left not merely a Book but also a living, teaching authority to interpret the Book, and that this was the only safe way of transmitting without error the deposit of Divine Faith from generation to generation for all time.

If it is so with High Church Anglicanism, it is, of course, far worse in the Nonconformist sections—they have practically thrown overboard all the great Christian doctrines. Yet these sects have been in existence only three or four centuries. Where will they be in another hundred years?

THE CHURCH UNCHANGED

Now, the remarkable, the startling thing, about Catholicism is that it *does not* change thus. For some unexplained reason—that is, unexplained by those who deny her Divine origin and authority—she clings steadfastly to her doctrines and principles, no matter what pressure is brought

to bear from without or from within; and in spite of the tendency to change and decay which is ingrained in every human institution.

The Catholic Church came into existence in the heyday of one of the greatest material civilizations history has known. In that Graeco-Roman world around the Mediterranean, Athens supplied the culture, Rome the material comfort and strong government that made personal development and enjoyment of life possible.

Yet the new religion did not hide itself away in a corner; it invaded at once all the great cities; and it did so just because it claimed the allegiance of the *intellect* of mankind—it appealed to reason as being a complete and satisfying solution of all the problems of life.

It met, of course, with the opposition of skeptical minds—it had to face ridicule—it found its way barred by all the obstacles which strong, living, human passions always raise against those who aim at the higher good. Yet the new Faith swept like a flame from city to city; from Jerusalem to Caesarea, Damascus, Antioch; up through Galatia and Phrygia to Roman Asia; through Philippi, Amphipolis, Thessalonica, to Athens—Athens the Oxford of the Roman Empire. And when Paul had lectured on Catholicism to the professors and students of that university city, an old-world Oxford Movement began whose effects are still going on around us.

THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS

Earlier still, the Faith had been preached in Rome—the great capital city. The leaven of Christ's teaching had been flung into that huge cauldron where all the cults and all the vices of paganism were seething; and the leaven was already doing its transforming work.

Picture to yourself some haughty senator, in the days of Nero, pacing leisurely in his luxurious gardens on the Aventine Hill, and gazing across the Tiber at the huddled dwelling places of the poor Jewish folk, situated in what is now called the Trastevere region. If anyone had told that senator that the future of civilization and of the world lay in the hands of a few beggarly foreigners, dwelling in the miserable tenements of that sordid Ghetto, what would he say? Yet so it was. Peter, the Jew from Galilee, with a

handful of fellow-Catholics, had lately come to Rome and was delivering the message, laying down the principles, preaching the doctrines, propagating the Faith, which you and I—fellow-Catholics—still hold; and which we hold just because—through the loyal fidelity of the Catholic Church in discharging her mission—the teaching of these Apostles of Christ has been handed down to us safe and sound across the gulf of ages.

Then, after a while the great pagan city became aware of the new force in its midst—it saw the danger and swooped down upon it to destroy it. It seemed so easy for the strength of mighty Rome that had conquered the whole world; that had crushed the empire of Alexander and annexed its fairest provinces; that had stretched a strong arm across the sea and seized Jugurtha, the wily and dangerous Numidian King, and shut him up safely in the Mamertine dungeon on the Capitol, and there let him starve to death; surely it would be easy for Rome to destroy this new and insignificant Syrian sect. They would seize the chiefs of it—one especially whom his fellow-Christians greatly honored, a Jew named Peter from Galilee—clap him, also, into the Mamertine dungeon where Jugurtha had perished; then, after a while, bring him forth—and, as an example to the world of the folly of resisting Cæsar, crucify him on the Vatican Hill—mark the name! the Vatican Hill—about the year 64 of our era.

Paul from Tarsus, another preacher of this new doctrine, being a Roman citizen, they would behead, and so make an end of him. Once the chiefs had been got rid of the thing would die out.

And our burly senator, pacing in his fragrant gardens on the Aventine Hill, receives news of this bloody work. He hears, too, of all the hundreds of other Christians tortured and burnt to death in Nero's Circus—to furnish forth a Roman holiday—and he shouts his approval: "Splendid! that's the way to get rid of the vermin; now let us have a cup of wine to celebrate the victory!"

Peter of Galilee crucified on the Vatican Hill!

And, just because of that far-off tragic event, today the Vatican Hill is the center of the world's spiritual life. To-day a few authoritative words spoken from the Vatican Hill, by a man who has inherited the Faith and the authority of Peter, find a ready acceptance and willing obedience in

every corner of the globe wherever Peter's fellow-Catholics are to be found. The pagan Empire that crucified Peter and strove to crush the doctrine he was preaching has long ago vanished from the face of the earth, leaving hardly a vestige behind. But the spiritual empire founded by Peter holds sway over wider realms than Imperial Rome ever dreamt of, and that empire is every day growing wider and stronger and more firmly rooted in men's souls.

FACING NEW FOES

When the Catholic Church had gradually ousted the pagan gods, other foes and other forces rose up to do battle against her. Within her own borders the fires of Arianism burst forth to test from within the strength of her doctrinal system, and blazed fiercely for many a long day.

Then, after a century or two, the storm of Mohammedanism burst upon her, and for a thousand years she was in almost incessant conflict with this strange Oriental cult that sprang as if by magic from the sands of Arabia and swept irresistibly around the world, almost engulfing Europe itself, and turning it into a province of Islam. But, again, Catholicism and its principles prevailed, though it was not until after the victory at Lepanto in 1571, and the rout of the Turks by Sobieski in 1686, that the Christian world felt secure from Mohammedan menace.

Then the thunder clouds of the Protestant Reformation filled the sky and broke with terrible violence over Catholic Europe. The Church seemed shaken to her very foundations, she seemed to be losing at last her hold on men's minds; yet she emerged triumphant from the struggle. She lost, indeed, some fair provinces of her spiritual realm, but she, herself, was marvelously purified and strengthened by the conflict.

And now here we are 400 years later. The Reformation tornado has passed; the forces evoked by Luther have spent their force, and Catholicism must gird itself to meet new foes that are arming for the fray.

STRONG AND VIGOROUS TODAY

But the point I would direct attention to is this: how marvelously strong and vigorous and full of life this Catho-

lic Church is after her stormy voyage across those momentous nineteen centuries! One would say that to her a century is as a year of life, and that only now is she approaching the heyday of youth!

To illustrate this, think of the two doctrines that are most characteristic of Catholicism and that have been exposed to the fiercest attacks of her enemies—namely, the authority of the Pope and Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist; and see whether these doctrines play a less intense part in the life of the Church in the twentieth century than they did in past ages.

Well, I think I am safe in saying that at no period of the Church's history have these two factors of Catholicism—the Papacy and the Eucharist—been so strongly emphasized, so honorably recognized, so passionately clung to and defended as today.

In Australia, there was a very vivid and palpable demonstration of this in the Eucharistic Congress last year. Everyone knows the marvelous public reception given by the whole people of Australia of every class and rank and creed to the Papal Legate, Cardinal Cerretti.

It is true that Cardinal Cerretti had won golden opinions during his stay as Apostolic Delegate ten or twelve years earlier. But still he came in September, 1929, as the representative of the Pope; and the unique reception accorded to him shows the respect which even the non-Catholic world yields to the head of our religion.

Then, too, the events of the past fifty years, especially the happenings during the Great War and the world-wide recognition of the splendid work and influence of Pope Benedict XV, and of our present Holy Father, Pius XI; furthermore, the recent startling events connected with the restoration of the temporal power and the recognition of the fact that the Pope, as head of a vast spiritual organization, which includes in its ranks men of every nation under heaven, must himself be quite independent, owing allegiance to no temporal sovereign, in order that he may be an impartial ruler of all—these events emphasize the unique position accorded to the Pope by non-Catholics the world over. When we add to this the deep and special reverence and submission shown to him by his own 300,000,000 subjects—the children of the Catholic Church—one may well ask: On what does this extraordinary dignity of the

Pope rest—this majestic authority recognized in one man alone of the whole human race? The answer is: *On the Catholic doctrine of the Pope's right to teach and rule as the Divinely appointed successor of St. Peter.* It is Catholicism that gives him his strength, and the honor paid by the whole world to the Papacy is a tribute to the unshakable strength of the Catholic system, of which the Pope is the living embodiment.

Australia honored in Cardinal Cerretti the Papal Legate. But it also, and in quite an amazing way, honored the mission he came to fulfil, which was to show public reverence to the Eucharist. He came to lead the Catholics of Australia in a public act of faith—in a gloriously solemn act of adoration of Jesus Christ under the Sacramental Veils.

THE FAITH A LIVING FORCE

Those who were in Sydney during the Congress, and who assisted at the wonderful religious functions which turned the great worldly city for a few days into a vast Catholic cathedral, when its citizens in hundreds of thousands thronged the streets to do reverence to the Mysteries which Catholics hold sacred—those who saw all that will find no difficulty in answering this question: Is the Faith of the Catholic Church still an active living force in men's lives? Have the storms of nineteen centuries broken her spirit, damped her courage, diminished her zeal, made her less loyal to the truths delivered to her keeping by her Divine Founder?

And when men realize the wonder of it and ponder on this living miracle of Catholic steadfastness in the midst of an ever-changing world—of Catholic loyalty and truth in a world of doubt, skepticism, and negation—of Catholic grasp of the supernatural amidst the ever-rising tide of materialism—they will ask themselves: What is the explanation of it all? Whence comes the secret force, the freshly springing life that makes all this possible in frail and fallible men and women? And perhaps it may come home to them that the answer given to that question by Catholicism is, after all, the true answer, simply because it is the only really satisfactory answer, namely, that the Catholic Church is what she is because she is the Church founded by Christ; and that when He said: "Behold I am with you all days

even to the end of the world," He meant what He said; and that in the fidelity to His principles, the supernatural activity, the all-embracing charity, the ceaseless throbbing life of the Catholic Church they are witnessing the actual fulfilment of the promise; in a word, that it is Christ Himself working in and through the Church as His Mystical Body that is producing these effects.

Then perhaps they, too, realizing all this, will join the procession of the ages and bend in submission beneath His gentle yoke—the yoke of Catholic Truth.

The Red Cord of Rahab

REV. JOHN BRAZIL, O.C.M.

From a leaflet of the Indian Catholic Truth Society

And sending them on their way, she hung the scarlet cord in the window (Josue, ii, 21).

IN the general and terrible slaughter, with which as ministers of God's judgment against its inhabitants, the Israelites overwhelmed the city of Jericho, there was one family immune from the general destruction—the family of Rahab, she who had served and sheltered the two spies whom Josue had sent to "view all the land."

The devastating army of victorious Israelites having walked dry-shod over the bed of the Jordan, and entered the city from every direction over the pavement of its fallen walls, looked for the sign which meant safety to Rahab and her family, the sign of the scarlet cord; for the spies had covenanted with her, promising protection on this condition: "If when we come into the land this scarlet cord be a sign, and thou tie it in the window by which thou hast let us down." The eyes of the hosts of Israel sought out the sign of the scarlet cord, respecting it as the sacramental manifestation of the peace of God, made for the one who had served the cause of Israel.

All through the terrible time, during which Israel was God's minister of wrath against the Canaanites, violence

was halted at the doorstep of Rahab, and "she, and her parents, and her brethren, and all her goods and her kindred" were safe under the sheltering sign of the scarlet cord.

During the month of June, the Church seeks to bind its children with the scarlet cord of devotion to the Sacred Heart, and promises them all the safety against sin and Satan which Rahab received against the enemies of her country under the sign of the scarlet cord.

There never was a time in the history of the Church which deserved to be called the golden age of the Church more than the present age in which it is our privilege to live. Never before were so many daily Masses, so many daily Communions, such an understanding of the truths of religion, such a special realization of the work of the great Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist as in these our own days, when from every church and school and Catholic home the sign of the scarlet cord of devotion to the Sacred Heart proclaims the power and the mercy and the love of the Heart that wrought our salvation. And what has brought about this quickening of the Catholic Faith, which sends ordinary Christians daily to the altar rails where canonized saints of other centuries dared to go but once a week, as St. Aloysius did, or twice or three times like St. Teresa?

It is primarily and principally because the fire which Our Lord cast upon the earth has been fanned into flame from Paray-le-Monial by the breath of St. Margaret Mary, and God's will that it be enkindled has been done by Popes and prelates and priests ever since, until in a holy sense the world has been bewitched by the charm which the great virgin apostle of the devotion to the Sacred Heart has put upon the children of the Church in all nations. You, good Catholic people, who read the lives of the saints, must see the contrast between the united working for the interests of Jesus Christ that obtains in our own day, with the disunion so often manifest in earlier times, when countries often were under interdict, when different saints gave allegiance to rival claimants to the Papal throne, when half the lives of saints was spent in reconciling rival cities, and factions in cities, when people made one Communion in a year, and when saints like Vincent de Paul founded Orders to teach people the elementary truths of religion, and tried to prepare them in missions to make one good confession in their lives.

There is no need to endeavor to prove that the blessed change has been brought about by God through the devotion to the Sacred Heart, which prepared the Faithful for the most blessed pronouncement of the saintly Pius X on daily Communion.

And all good things come with daily Communion. The oneness of the Church was never so manifest as now. In other times cities, or countries, or churches withstood the Popes at different times. Who would think of doing so now? The holiness of the Church was never so manifest as now, for, though we do not so frequently see an individual saint like Francis of Assisi, the numbers of people who live principally for God was never so great in any century before; never were so many good Catholics in every walk of life, or, such numbers serving the sanctuary, or striving after the highest perfection in Religious Orders.

The Catholicity and Apostolicity of the Church were never so manifest, in the sense that the spirit of the Apostles—God's spirit poured out on all flesh—shows in a perpetual Pentecost of devotion to the spreading of Catholic truth among all nations, so that the missionaries of Holy Church are to be found in the frozen North, where the whale oil freezes in the altar lamp, and among the "naked negroes panting at the Line"—in farthest North, in the sunny South, in the Far East; and perhaps best of all, in all civilized parts of the world specially and particularly "the poor have the Gospel preached to them."

We do not need to look for the cause of these God-like effects. Well do we know them, for the sign of the scarlet cord of the devotion to the Sacred Heart hangs over them to tell where is the source of the efficacy which God has given to the work of His Church in these our days. And so, spurred on to do better, because of all the good that is around us; because of the example set from the high places, where the Holy Father and the Hierarchy rule the Church of God; because of the example set by our priests, whose zeal has secured that the signs by which Our Lord let Himself be known while on earth have become prominent in every city where, by the institutions which they have caused Catholic Faith to establish and maintain, "the blind see, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the poor have the Gospel preached to them"; let us bind the sign of the scarlet cord, of the devotion which is red and glowing with the

charity of God, manifest in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, closer and closer, and we shall be proof against all ghostly enemies. With the battle cry, "Cease, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is with me!" we shall drive Satan back to hell, as Rahab warded off destruction from her household. "And sending them on their way, she hung the scarlet cord in the window."

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